

From: echristl@aur.alcatel.com@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/24/02 9:23am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

My first computer came with a copy Digital Research's Operating System and I can testify to the fact that misleading error messages were reported when trying to install Windows 3.1. I found DR-DOS to be a much better operating system than MS-DOS (for instance, unlike DR-DOS, MS-DOS's 'undelete' utility would only work on one file per directory). I was much chagrined when I could not get a copy of DR-DOS for my second computer, since I could not find any manufacturer that didn't force a copy of Microsoft's OS on me.

Being a new developer at the time, I tired of the constant rebooting the Microsoft Windows 3.1 required whenever a problem in one of my programs surfaced. On the advice of a workmate, I switched to IBM's OS/2. I couldn't find a system with the OS pre-installed, so I spent 16 hours doing it myself. I was amazed at the stability, intuitiveness and integration of OS/2 compared to Windows. Eventually, I gave up on OS/2 due to the lack of community support.

Now I use Linux. I've learned to build by own computers in order to avoid the MS Tax. I have seen so many excellent technologies literally pushed out of the market by strong-arm tactics, that I refuse rely on MS products. I do have one system that dual boots to Win95 so that my children can play games, but even that was a hassle since MS products will not run unless installed on the first partition. I cannot arrange MY partitions as I like. In other words, even if you build your own computers, anything that touches MS will be corrupted by MS.

I still use Netscape, because it is the only browser I have that support multiple platforms. I can used it on OS/2, and now use it on Windows, Linux, and my Sun Workstation at work. MS torpedoed Netscape -- killing a strong innovative competitor by dumping an inferior product on the market and then using its OS monopoly to force IE down OEM's throats.

MS will continue to torpedo anyone that threatens their monopoly in even the slightest way. The courts must curtail this behavior if any technology company other than MS is ever to survive. I see only one way for this to occur. The courts must:

- 1) Require Microsoft to publish and make freely available all technical specifications for default saved data formats.

People should not feel coerced into using MS products because only MS products can deal with the documents that the PEOPLE have created. People should be able to share the information they create for themselves with others who choose to purchase from competitors of MS. Most everyone saves their data in the default data format chosen by the

program. MS could keep their '.doc' format closed, but make '.rtf' (which is just as capable, but open to all) the default.

2) Remove any restrictive licensing or discriminatory pricing, including volume pricing, that would coerce an OEM manufacturer to only ship MS products.

This includes the 'dual boot' restrictions as well as any other hidden clauses in their 'trade secret' contracts. Once Microsoft has sold the product, it should be out of their hands, just like a physical good. And allowing them to force an OEM out of the market by raising the price of a monopoly product by \$100 (when the profit from a system is \$50) is a total miscarriage of justice.

In short, make MS products play nice with the rest of the world and then let the market decide.

It is impossible to put the market back to where it was when I fell in love with DR-DOS, and OS/2 will probably never come back. But Microsoft cannot be allowed to continue forcing productive, innovative companies out of the market. I still

--

"The Laws of Aerodynamics are unforgiving and the ground is hard."

Michael Collins (1987)
